



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 146754

DfES Number: 546144

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	19/05/2004
Inspector Name	Susan Tuffnell

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Early Days Playgroup
Setting Address	Oughtonhead School Mattocke Road HITCHIN Hertfordshire SG5 2NZ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Early Days Playgroup 1036802
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Early Days Playgroup
Address	c/o Oughton Primary School Mattocke Road Hitchin Hertfordshire SG2 2NZ

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Early Days Playgroup opened in November 2002. It operates in a room at Oughtonhead Primary School in Hitchin. The playgroup serves the local area and some surrounding towns.

There are currently 55 children on roll from 2 to 5 years. This includes 12 funded 3 year olds and 3 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of session and the group support 0 children with special needs and 1 child who speaks English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09.00am to 14.00pm.

There are 6 part time staff working with the children, all have early years qualifications.

The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

Early Days Playgroup provide good care for children.

The staff provide a bright, cheerful and stimulating environment, welcoming, well managed and clean.

There is a good operational plan and staff have clear guidelines to follow. Effective organisational skills are shown by the manager and staff. There is a high level of qualified staff and high adult ratios to children. Staff access a range of training opportunities.

There is excellent planning for a stimulating range and balance of activities. Children are involved in a broad variety of play and learning, they make decisions and relate well to others, however older and more able children need challenging activities.

Children have access to an abundance of play materials, toys and equipment. Staff respond to children's interests, praise and encourage them.

Staff training incorporates health and safety and efficient measures are in place to reduce risks to children, but there is no fire drill recording carried out and parents do not have information about notifiable infectious diseases.

Children's individuality and independence is valued and respected by staff. Children with special dietary requirements are well catered for and good care and attention given to children with special needs. Resources are found and/or adapted to suit individual children.

Staff encourage children's good behaviour and provide positive role models although the behaviour management policy does not refer to bullying issues.

There is thoughtful planning of festivals and celebrations and resources to reflect the wider world.

Staff are knowledgeable and experienced in child protection issues but the policy does not refer to the Area Child Protection Committee procedures (ACPC).

Procedures for information sharing with parents are good, giving parents every opportunity to be involved in all aspects of their children's development and progress.

All necessary documentation is in place or being updated.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the management agreed to ensure that the complaints procedure is updated with the regulators address and telephone number and ensure that evidence is provided of risk assessments taking place.

The complaints procedure has now been updated and risk assessments carried out regularly.

What is being done well?

- Staff plan a range of stimulating activities. The children enjoyed the water trays that were linked to the topic area, the Rainbow Fish. Children identified different types of model fish, matching, sorting and counting them.
- Staff encouraged discussion about the colours and patterns identified by the children.
- Children relate well together and are building friendships. Little groups of children of mixed age range played together, dancing and swaying as they sang a well known song. Other children joined the group and other songs were suggested and sung. Children played with the "shakers" and then made up a dance, following each other through the room.

What needs to be improved?

- documentation - further information to be included
- activities that challenge older and more able children

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
3	plan activities that challenge older and more able children
14	devise a procedure for lost or uncollected children. devise and implement a policy a policy about the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious and make sure parents are made aware of this. ensure that the child protection procedure complies with local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Early Days Playgroup is of good quality overall. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development, physical development and creative development and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Planning covers all aspects of learning, linking activities to topic areas providing depth of understanding and knowledge. Assessment of children's progress is well managed and staff evaluate children's work.

There is an effective use of time and resources to encourage children's independence, however further opportunities could be provided to challenge more able children in all areas of development. Staff develop children's personal, social and emotional development and creative development well, they use open-ended questions and link subjects to stimulate children's imagination. Children are progressing very well in physical development, staff are proactive in encouraging children to try new experiences. Effective systems are in place to support children with English as an additional language. Children are able to explore and express themselves freely through play, they behave well and respond to direction from staff.

Leadership and management is generally good. The nursery benefits from a strong dedicated manager and a committed staff team. Staff are involved in the planning and evaluation of activities. Staff are well trained, knowledgeable and experienced. They monitor children's progress through the key worker system and frequently update development records.

Partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents are given every opportunity to be involved in all aspects of children's development and progress, talk informally to staff and attend meetings. There is good written information for parents, regularly updated and displayed.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is well developed, children are settled and confident. They make attachments to each other, building friendships and showing care and concern for others. They have developed a good understanding of right and wrong, play cooperatively and share resources well.
- Children are showing curiosity and a strong exploratory impulse. They use expression and imagination in creative development. Small groups of children join together in impromptu
- singing and clapping. Musical instruments were used by the children to

create a "shaker dance".

- Children have accomplished skills in movement and a sense of space. Their physical development is very good. They are confident climbers on the apparatus and show increasing control in balancing, catching and kicking objects.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to use numbers in problem solving
- opportunities for children to write and make marks in role play and everyday situations
- opportunities for children to use vocabulary for recall and expression
- opportunities for children to investigate construction materials

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have developed good relationships with each other and adults. They are secure and confident and show care and concern for self and others. There is a high level of involvement in activities such as the water tray and spaghetti activity and children have a positive approach to new experiences. Behaviour is very good, children show awareness of expectations and understand right and wrong. Children are making friends and grouping together independently.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident speakers and listeners, communicating well in group activities and in pairs. Children actively seek out adults for conversation about holidays and family events using words and gestures. Opportunities for using vocabulary for recall after story time was limited and there were few opportunities for children to express or elaborate on ideas using a widening range of words, or write and make marks in roll play and everyday situations.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are developing an awareness of number rhymes and songs. They count confidently as a group and use mathematical language in activities such as the water tray and the computer. They correctly named shapes in the sandwich making activity and used positional language in music and movement. Children do not have many opportunities for solving number problems and little interest or curiosity in offering comments or asking questions.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have a natural curiosity that is fostered by staff in some activities about the world in which they live, a project on Holland allowed them to gain awareness of another culture. The life cycle of a frog was represented by a tank of tadpoles and magnifying glasses were given to the children to study their environment. Children did not have opportunities to build and investigate construction, explore and observe shape or use a range of tools.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have ample opportunity to climb and balance using a range of equipment. They negotiate space very well in music and movement and chasing bubbles. Children operate the tape recorder confidently and show good hand-eye skills with scissors, ink stamps and brushes. They show awareness of their own needs and are competent at personal hygiene, washing hands and using tissues. Staff extended the children's range of movements with a football game.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children are involved in exciting creative activities, they explored a range of colours, textures and shapes in the water trays, responding to the experience with expression and imagination. Children enjoyed chasing bubbles and were absorbed in the spaghetti activity. They have a wide repertoire of songs and rhythms which they join in enthusiastically and small groups gave impromptu shows to other children, clapping, singing and swaying.	
Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.	

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- ensure planning provides activities for children to use numbers in problem solving
- provide children with opportunities to write and make marks in role play and everyday situations
- provide opportunities for children to use vocabulary for recall and expression
- improve opportunities for children to investigate construction materials

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.